# 4.4 Northern Alaska

# 4.4.1 Northern Alaska

## Communities

**Elim**
**Nome**
**Prudhoe Bay**
**Shaktoolik**
**Unalakleet**

## Geographic Location

The Northern Alaska sub-region includes three areas: the Nome Census Area, North Slope Borough, and the Northwest Arctic Borough. These three areas together make-up 147,716 square miles of land area, but are extremely sparsely populated. All but one of the profiled communities belonging to this sub-region in this document is located in the Nome Census Area, which makes up 23,001 square miles of land. The communities in the Nome Census Area are located for the most part on the Norton Sound. The Census Area reaches to the borders of Russia to the west, 66.25667 ˚N Lat to the north, and approximately 62.77778 ˚N Lat to the south. The Nome Census Area is also known as the Bering Strait Region. One of the communities, Prudhoe Bay, is located in the North Slope Borough which makes up 88,817.1 square miles of land and 5,945.5 square miles of water. Prudhoe Bay is located on the Beaufort Sea. The North Slope Borough is at approximately 69 ˚N Lat and -154 ˚ W Long and spans across the entire top of the State of Alaska. It makes up over 15% of the total land area of Alaska.

## Weather

The weather in the Nome Census Area of Northern Alaska is for the most part sub-arctic. It ranges in temperature in the summer from about the mid-40s to mid-60s. During the winter the temperature ranges from approximately -12 ˚F to 11 ˚F, depending on the community. Precipitation ranges from about 8-18 inches with 33-56 inches of snowfall. Norton Sound is usually free of ice from the months of May to October and the Chukchi Sea to the north is typically ice-free from about mid-June to mid-November. The weather in the North Slope Borough is arctic with extreme temperatures ranging from -56 ˚F to 78 ˚F. Precipitation is about 5 inches per year in the North Slope; however, snowfall averages at about 20 inches.

## General Characterization

There are no areas which are considered to be metropolitan in the Nome locale; however, the city of Nome is the center for supplies, transportation, and services and its population makes up roughly half the population of the entire Census Area which included a total of 9,196 persons in 2000. The other cities and villages ranged in population from 21 to 747 inhabitants. Most communities are reachable by both air and sea and have runway facilities for air travel and docking facilities for vessels.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census there were a total of 7,385 inhabitants of the North Slope Borough, with a very mobile population of about 5,000 oil field workers who rotate through different sites in the State and to different states as well. Communities in the North Slope are reachable year-round by air, with land providing only seasonal access to the communities.

A large percentage of Northern Alaskans were Alaska Native or American Indian. In the Nome area, as well as the North Slope Borough, this was as high as 74%. The Nome area was historically occupied by Inupiaq peoples, but also by Yupik and Athabascan, such as in the Unalakleet area. Traditional livelihoods, such as subsistence practices, remain very important to inhabitants. In the North Slope Borough area it was historically occupied by Inupiaq peoples, however with oil exploration and the Trans-Alaska Pipeline persons originating from all over the world have come to the area for employment.

The economies of the profiled communities in the Nome area are very heavily dependent upon subsistence harvests. Even in cities that provide wage earning opportunities, subsistence activities remain prevalent. The opportunities for employment were mostly in commercial fishing. A processor was present in Nome as well as one in Unalakleet. A

buying station was located in Elim. Residents also held government employment in Elim, Nome, and Unalakleet. Mining, oil, and tourism also provided employment in Nome. In 2000, the Census Area had an annual unemployment rate of 12.3%; however, some of the smaller communities held a much higher rate. The poverty rate was quite high for the area as well, with 17.4% of the population living below the poverty level.

The economy for the North Slope area is based on oil operations. The Borough government is funded by these oil tax revenues. Subsistence activities are prevalent in the North Slope. No one lived below the poverty level in the community of Prudhoe Bay; however, 9.1% of the population of the Borough lived below the poverty level.

### Institutional Framework

The communities profiled in the Nome Census Area of Northern Alaska were not part of any organized borough. All were incorporated cities with "strong mayor" forms of government, which included city councils. All profiled communities had their own Traditional Council as well as a Native Village Corporation. The Regional Native Corporation in which the communities of the Bering Strait Region are included is the Bering Straits Native Corporation (BSNC). The BSNC is a for-profit Native corporation created by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) which owns land and is entitled to the subsurface rights of that land, as well as holding patent or interim conveyance to the subsurface land of much of the village corporations. The BSNC has quite a few subsidiaries operating various businesses including a real estate holdings company (which also owns a hotel), a gold mining company, an electrical construction business, a car rental business, and various other businesses.

The regional non-profit organization for those communities in the Nome Census Area is Kawerak, Inc. which has "programs ranging from education to housing, and natural resource management to economic development. Kawerak seeks to improve the region's social, economic, educational, cultural, and political conditions" (Kawerak, Inc. 2001). The community development quota (CDQ) organization for the area, the Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation (NSEDC), includes 15 communities and represents the largest population of all the CDQs. The NSEDC is given a percentage of the harvests of certain species and uses the revenue generated from such for community development and various programs including scholarships for education as well as community outreach. The NSEDC also operates Norton Sound Seafood Products (NSSP) in order to provide seafood processors who will purchase the fish of the area. There are three NSSP processors in the Norton Sound area.

For the North Slope Borough communities the situation is quite different. The communities are all part of a borough which provides services such as a school district, however most of the facilities are provided by the oil industry. As in the case of Prudhoe Bay, some communities are unincorporated, but it appears for the most part that communities in the borough are incorporated. Prudhoe Bay was not included in ANSCA and thus did not have either a Native regional corporation or Native village corporation. There also was not a local traditional council for the village which was federally recognized. The regional non-profit organization in which the community is included is the Arctic Slope Association.

### Commercial, Sport, and Subsistence Fisheries

Every community profiled in this section participated in the commercial fishing sector in some substantial way: either as having permit holders, crew members, or a processor. The most important fisheries in regard to the amount of permit holders for the area appear to be salmon, king crab, and herring. Halibut was also fished. Quite a few of the permits issued for salmon were not fished in 2000 (over half were not fished in some communities), perhaps because of the recent falling salmon prices attributed to competition with foreign aquaculture fish. Both Nome and Unalakleet have Norton Sound Seafood Products (NSSP) processors in operation. A NSSP buying station is present in Elim. Only one permit was issued in the community of Prudhoe Bay; however, since this one resident accounted for more than 15% of the population the community was profiled even though other indicators of a fishing community were not present.

Sport fishing did not seem to be much of a major industry in the profiled communities in comparison to other areas in Alaska. About 1,728 sport fishing licenses were sold in the profiled communities. Over 70% of those licenses were sold to Alaska residents,

which may show that little revenue is being generated by sport fishing in the area by tourists. Over 70% of the licenses were also sold in the city of Nome. There were five sport fishing guide businesses in Nome and one which was located in Unalakleet.

Subsistence harvesting is very important to members of the region and is a large component of the economy. Little has been reported by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) in regard to total subsistence harvests and species harvested for this area, however evidence of its importance is shown in the daily wild food harvest totals for the communities which are at the high end of the spectrum of subsistence in Alaska, ranging from 1.7 to 1.85 lbs per person per day for the smaller communities. Those residents of Nome harvested approximately 0.658 lbs per person per day which is much less than the smaller communities, but still shows that subsistence is being utilized. There was no specific subsistence information available from ADF&G for the community of Prudhoe Bay in the North Slope Census Area; however, subsistence is important to permanent residents who participate in marine mammal hunts and other activities.

## Regional Challenges

The Bering Strait Region has had its share of challenges including those associated with the rural character of the region affecting the prices of goods and cost of living for the area. There are few jobs available in some of the communities and the per capita income is comparatively low for the state. Education levels are also low, and poverty rates are relatively high. The dependence upon salmon fisheries has become a serious problem during the recent falling salmon prices. Many communities in the area were awarded compensation by the federal government in salmon disaster funds in order to help to replace funds which were lost in salmon taxes which provided basic services for many communities.

Challenges in the North Slope would most likely be the fact that most facilities in a community such as Prudhoe Bay are provided by the private oil industry companies.

# Elim (return to communities)

## People and Place

### Location

Elim is located on the northwest shore of Norton Bay on the Seward Peninsula, 96 miles east of Nome. It lies 460 miles northwest of Anchorage. The area encompasses 2.4 square miles of land and no water area. Norton Sound is ice-free generally between mid-June and mid-November.

### Demographic Profile

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Elim had 313 inhabitants. The entire community lived in households, 20% of all housing units were vacant, and there were no group quarters. About 94.2% of the population was fully, or in part, Alaska Native or American Indian. Approximately 5.1% were white and 2.2% were of two or more races. The gender composition presented an acute imbalance: 43.1% females and 56.9% males.

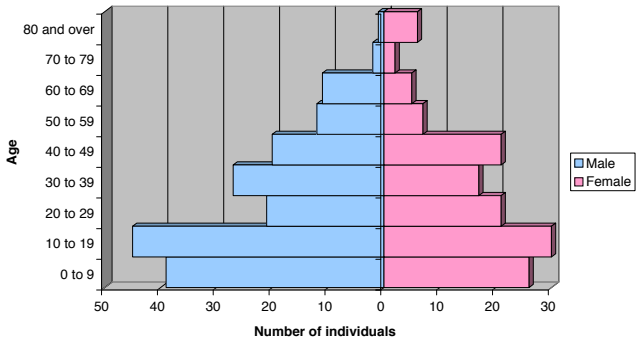
Similar to many other rural communities, Elim was a young village. Its median age (23.6 years old) was significantly younger than the national median (35.3 years in 2000): 44.7% of the population was 19 years old and under and only 9.9% was 55 years and over. A total of 7.5% of the population of Elim age 25 and over had a bachelor's degree or higher, 77.4% had graduated from high school or gone on to further schooling, and 22.6% never passed high school.

### History

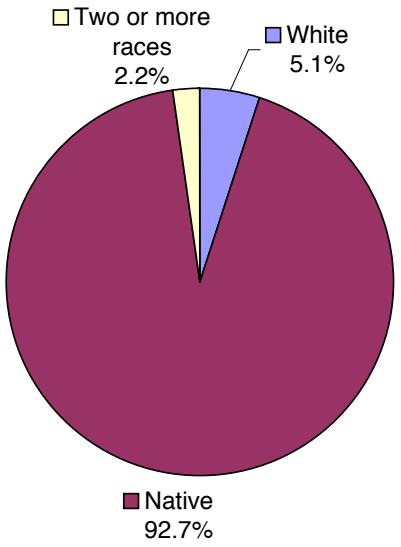
Elim was once a Malemiut Inupiat Eskimo village, known as Nuviakchak. Inupiak groups occupied all this area and managed the territory through hunting and gathering practices. In 1911 part of this territory was declared federal reindeer reserve.

Three years later, in 1914, the foundation of the Elim Mission Roadhouse, including a mission and convent, represented another fundamental moment of Elim's modern history. The City was incorporated in 1970. A year later, the community of Elim chose not to participate in the political process around the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) and instead opted for title to the 298,000 acres of land in the former Elim Reserve. Subsistence practices remains significant to the economy, diet, and lifestyle of the community. The sale or importation of alcohol is banned in the village.

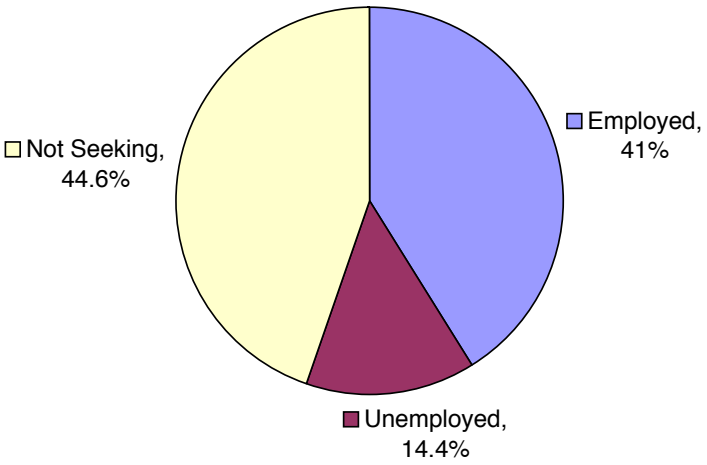
**2000 Population Structure**
**Elim**
Data source: US Census




**2000 Racial Structure**
**Elim**
Data source: US Census




**2000 Employment Structure**
**Elim**
Data source: US Census



# Infrastructure

## Current Economy

Elim is a small town which has a relatively insular economy. Subsistence harvesting is still a very important part of the local economy, and is fundamental to many households. As a vast majority of the community is Alaska Native (Endangered Species Act restrictions do not apply), seal, walrus, beluga whale, reindeer, moose, fish and home gardens are main elements of inhabitants' diet.

Cash employment is related to two main factors: fishing (39 commercial fishing permit holders) and government employment (28.4% of the potential workforce). Elim's fishing fleet has two delivery alternatives, either landing their catch in Unalakleet or Nome - places with processing plants - or selling their catch at the buying station owned by the Norton Sound Seafood Products company in town.

The employment structure showed that 41% of the total workforce was employed, a very high 14.4% was unemployed, and 44.6% of the potential workforce was not seeking a job. In 2000, 7.9% of the population lived below the line of poverty. The community showed a per capita income of $10,300 and a median household income of $40,179.

## Governance

The second-class city of Elim, incorporated in 1970, has a "strong mayor" form of government with a six-member council. The city, located in an unorganized area, collects a 2% sales tax. Elim Native Corporation is the local Native corporation. The regional Native corporation, a for-profit organization with its headquarters in Nome, is the Bering Straits Native Corporation, which operates a series of businesses including the Bering Straits Development Company and the non-profit Bering Strait Foundation. Its counterpart in the area, the regional Native non-profit institution, is the Kawerak, Inc. The CDQ, located in Anchorage, is the Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation (NSEDC). NSEDC operates the Norton Sound Seafood Products facility. Also located in the community is the Native Village of Elim, recognized as a traditional council by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Elim did not participate in ANCSA, though they have full title to approximately 300,000 acres of former reservation lands.

The area is also served by the Bering Straits Housing Authority, the Norton Sound Health Corporation (regional health corporation serving the Bering Strait villages) and the Eskimo Walrus Commission (regional non-profit organization serving 19 communities in the western coast).

Nome and Unalakleet have the closest Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) offices. In order to access to a Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS) office, Elim inhabitants must to go Nome. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has its closest quarters in Anchorage.

## Facilities

The community is accessible by air and sea. It has a good and recently modernized state-owned 3,000 foot gravel runway. The local Native corporation owns a private 4,700 foot paved airstrip with a 1,390 foot crosswind runway at Moses Point. The approximate price of a roundtrip ticket by plane from the community to Anchorage, with a connection in Nome, in early September of 2003 was approximately $560. Elim's airport is served by Hagland Air, Baker Aviation, Cape Smith Air Service, Olson Air, and Artic Transportation Service. Elim does not have its own dock. Supplies are brought and lightered to shore from Nome. There are plans to develop a dock which could significantly change the economic structure of the village. A cargo ship brings freight annually to Nome.

The local school, the Anguiin, has 196 students and 9 teachers. There is also a city owned health service, Elim Health Clinic, police, and state Village Public Safety Officer (VPSO). The city owns the AVEC which provides diesel fuel-generated power as well as subsidized power. Water is derived from a well, and sewage services are provided by centralized systems built in 1974. This early infrastructure included indoor water heaters and plumbing, and in-home washers and dryers.

# Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

## Commercial Fishing

Elim, with its relatively small size, is deeply engaged in all sort of fishing activities. On the commercial side, Elim had 48 commercial fishing permits, only 26 of which were fished. There were a total of 39 permit holders resident in the community.

There were also 28 residents registered as crewmen. The lack of a dock probably limited the operations of the part of the community involved in fishing. Current plans to build one can significantly change this situation. Permits held by community-members pertained to three species: herring, salmon, and crab.

*Herring:* There were 11 permits to catch herring roe with pot gear in vessels under 60 feet. All of them were issued to fish in the Norton Sound, although only 10 of these permits were fished.

*Salmon:* Salmon permits constitute the largest share of Elim's fleet. There were 36 permits to catch salmon (16 fished). There was one permit to set gillnets in the Lower Yukon River and 35 permits for gillnets in the Norton Sound (15 fished).

*Crab:* One permit was issued for catch king crab with pot gear in a vessel under 60 feet in the Norton Sound (not fished).

There were no real fish landings in the community due to the absence of processing plants. Vessels from this community deliver landings somewhere else, usually to Nome or Unalakleet. Elim does have a buying station for Norton Sound Seafood Products. The NSSP is a company established by the NSEDC (CDQ) as a development project.

Although many neighboring communities received direct economic compensation through federal salmon disaster funds in order to soften the impact of plummeting salmon prices, Elim did not. The NSEDC did received $78,599 to reduce the impact of Steller sea lion protective regulations that came up after the inclusion of this species into the endangered species list. The NSEDC, in turn, allocated $20,000 in community benefits to Elim. This allocation, under ESA regulations, was implemented in 2002.

## Sport Fishing

In 2000 this community issued five sport fishing licenses, all purchased by local residents. This fact however, does not preclude the possibility that the area could have been visited by numerous outsiders who obtained their permits elsewhere. In 2002 the village had no official evidence of any business dealing with sport fishing as either a personal endeavor or as a tourist activity.

## Subsistence Fishing

The ADF&G does not have systematic and reliable surveys on the subsistence activities of most of the Norton Sound communities, included Elim. However, evidence from similar communities in similar environments point out that these practices are fundamental to understanding their economy and social structure. An estimate of the ADF&G situates Elim's daily wild food harvest over 1.85 lbs per person. Such a quantity is evidence of the importance of subsistence practices for the local economy.

Additionally, 78 household permits were held in Elim to catch subsistence salmon, accounting for approximately 4,000 fish (mainly pink salmon and coho salmon). Moreover, village inhabitants (as part of a tribe and/or part of a rural community) are eligible for the Subsistence Halibut Registration Certificate (SHARC). These allocations are based on recognized customary and traditional uses of halibut. Regulations to implement subsistence halibut fishing were published in the Federal Register in April 2003 and became effective May 2003.

# Nome (return to communities)

## People and Place

### Location

The City of Nome is Alaska's oldest first-class city, incorporated on April 9, 1901. Nome is located on the south coast of the Seward Peninsula facing Norton Sound and part of the Bering Sea. It lies 539 air miles northwest of Anchorage (a 75-minute flight) and 102 miles south of the Arctic Circle, 161 miles east of Russia.

### Demographic Profile

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the city of Nome had 3,505 inhabitants. The racial composition of Nome was as follows: 51% Alaska Native, 37.9% White, 1.5% Asian, 0.9% Black, 0.1% Hawaiian Native, 0.4% "Other," and 8.2% identified with two or more racial groups. A total of 58.7% of the population recognized themselves as all or part Alaska Native or American Indian. At the same time, 2.1% of the population identified themselves as having Hispanic origin. The median age of this community is slightly younger than the national average: 32.4 years versus 35.3 years. In 2000, the largest age group, 46.6%, fell between 25 and 54 years old, and a significant 34.4% of the population was under 19 years of age.

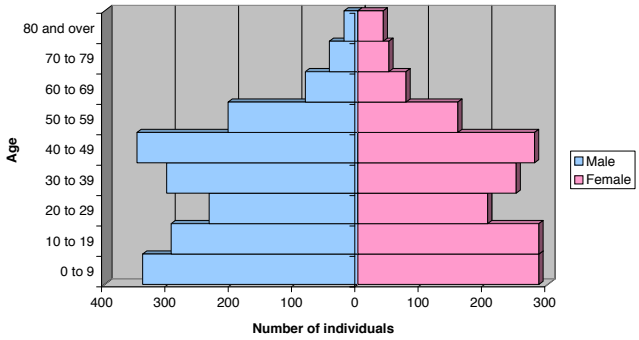
This community has a fairly skewed gender ratio: 53.5% male and 46.5% female. In 2000, 202 individuals of the community lived in group quarters. The rest of the population, 85.7%, lived in households. Of those age 25 years and over in Nome, about 80.1% had graduated from high school or gone on to further schooling and 20.3% had obtained a bachelor's degree or higher. About 19.9% of the population never completed high school or received their diploma.

### History

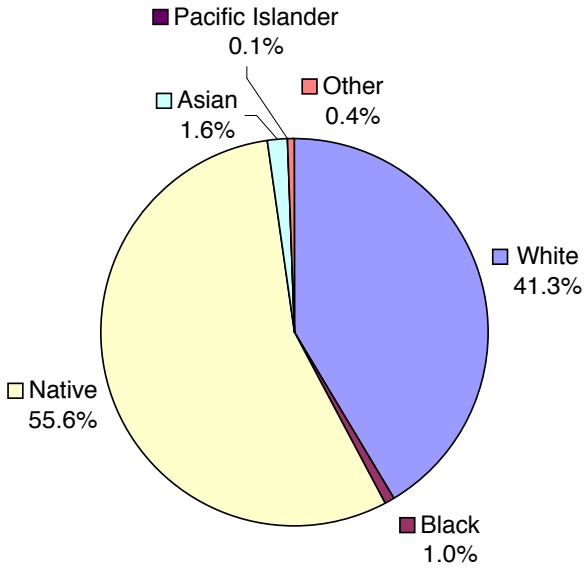
Different Inupiat groups have inhabited the Seward Peninsula for hundreds of years. A complex and environmentally adapted culture has allowed Malemiut, Kauweramiut and Unalikmiut Eskimos to survive on a subsistence economy based on several forms of hunting, fishing, and harvesting.

Gold was discovered in the area around the 1860s by prospectors. Soon, thousands of miners attracted by these discoveries flooded the area. Almost overnight an isolated stretch of tundra fronting the beach was transformed into a tent-and-log cabin city of 20,000

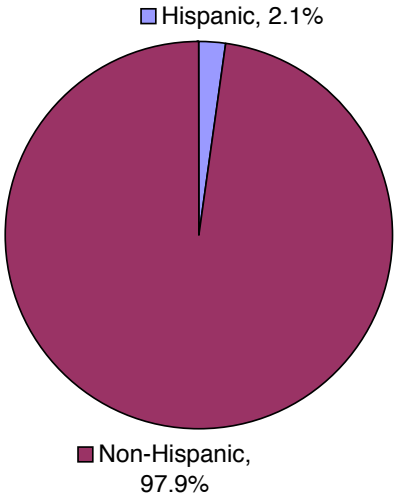
**2000 Population Structure**
**Nome**
Data source: US Census




**2000 Racial Structure**
**Nome**
Data source: US Census




**2000 Hispanic Ethnicity**
**Nome**
Data source: US Census

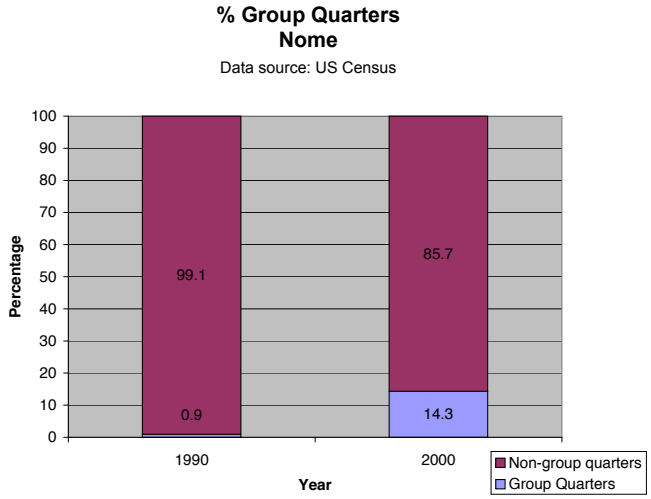


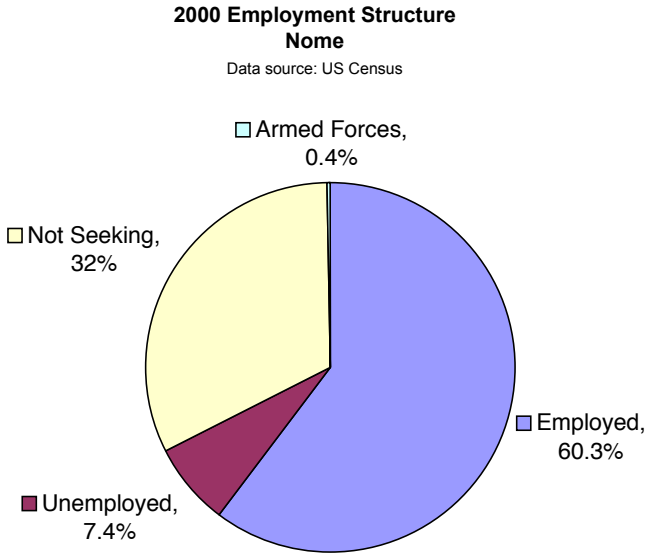
prospectors, gamblers, claim jumpers, saloon keepers, and prostitutes. The gold-bearing creeks had been almost completely staked, when some entrepreneur discovered the "golden sands of Nome." This new situation affected the traditional Eskimo way of life. For instance, a fundamental resource of the peninsula, the caribou, started to decline around the 1870s. This fact initiated a shift in local diets. Many more changes followed.

At the turn of the century, Nome was connected by railroad and telephone to Anvil Creek. The City of Nome was officially formed in 1901. A few years later the chaotic gold rush was taken over by powerful and more organized mining companies.

The main negative phenomena that affected Nome during the first half of the 20th century were gold depletion, the influenza epidemic (1918), the depression, and a major fire that almost destroyed the city in 1934. Alternatively, WWII - with Alaska located centrally on the Pacific front - the expansion of the fishing industry, oil discovery in the North Slope, and the slowly growing tourism industry were positive factors in Nome's re-consolidation in the second half of the century.

Although, as seen in the demographic section, Nome is currently populated by all sorts of "racial" groups, subsistence activities still play a fundamental role in the local economy. Nome is also the place where many of the former inhabitants of King Island resettled. Nome is the finish line for the 1,100-mile Iditarod Sled Dog Race from Anchorage, held each March.




## Infrastructure

### Current Economy

Nome's economy is complex. It needs to be understood not just as a self-contained unit but as a regional commercial center that supplies all sorts of services to the Bering Strait area. The range of services includes transportation, supplies, government, and so on. An important part of the employment is provided by government services but Nome also has mining and oil extraction businesses, and tourism is slowly developing.

Nome is also a fishing community with 60 commercial permit holders, 151 subsistence salmon harvest permits, and is the headquarters and home of a processing plant of the Norton Sound Seafood Products. Subsistence activities are an important complement to local household diets and economies.

The employment structure illustrated by the 2000 U.S. Census shows that 60.3% of the total workforce was employed, 7.4% was unemployed, 0.4% worked with the armed forces and 32% of the workforce was not seeking jobs. In 2000, 6.3% of the population lived below the line of poverty. The community showed a per capita income of $23,402 and a median household income of $59,402.

### Governance

Nome is a first-class city and was incorporated in 1901. It has a "strong mayor" form of government with a seven-member council. The city, which is not

organized under a borough, has a 4% sales tax, 4% accommodation tax, and a 0.126% property tax.

The Sitnasuak Native Corporation is the local Native corporation managing approximately 240,000 acres under ANCSA. The regional Native corporation, a for-profit organization, with its headquarters in Nome, is the Bering Straits Native Corporation, which operates a series of businesses including the Bering Straits Development Company and the non-profit Bering Strait Foundation. Its counterpart in the area, the regional Native non-profit institution, is the Kawerak, Inc. The CDQ of the area, located in Anchorage, is the Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation (NSEDC). NSEDC operates Norton Sound Seafood Products (NSSP).

Nome is also home to the headquarters of the Bering Straits Housing Authority and the Norton Sound Health Corporation (regional health corporation serving the Bering Strait villages). In addition, the Eskimo Walrus Commission, the regional non-profit organization which serves 19 communities in the western coast, is also located in Nome.

Nome has its own Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS) offices. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has its closest office in Anchorage.

### Facilities

Nome, as a regional center, is readily accessible by air and sea. The town acts as a transport distribution center for most of the Norton Sound area. The city has two State-owned airports. The Nome Airport has a two paved runways, one 6,000 feet in length, and the other at 5,500 feet. An $8.5 million airport improvement project is nearing completion. Scheduled jet flights are available, as well as charter and helicopter services. Flights are operated by Baker Aviation, Bering Air, Alaska Airlines, Cape Smith Air Service, Hageland, Olson, Grant, Artic Transportation Services, Frontier, Northern Air Cargo, and Evergreen Helicopters. Lynden, Alaska Cargo Express and Everest all provide freight service to Nome. The price of a roundtrip ticket from the community to Anchorage in early September of 2003 was $369.

Nome's seaward side is protected by a 3,350-foot-long sea wall. A port and berthing facilities accommodate vessels up to 18 feet of draft. Cargo services are provided to communities of the area from this harbor. Local development groups and the City are currently funding harbor dredging, two seasonal floating docks, and a boat launch. Local roads lead to Teller, Council, and the Kougarok River.

Visitor accommodations are provided by several lodging services. Nome has four schools that in total have 739 students and 48 teachers. Healthcare services in Nome and neighboring communities are provided by the Norton Sound Regional Hospital. Alternative healthcare services are provided by the Nome Volunteer Ambulance Department, the Norton Sound Health Corporation, Medevac Service, and Quyanna Care center. The town, in addition, has its own city police department as well as a state trooper post.

Nome obtains its water from a well at Moonlight Springs. This water is treated at the Snake River Power Plant. The water and the sewage systems, covering almost the entire city, are owned and operated by the city.

## Involvement with North Pacific fisheries

### Commercial Fishing

Nome is not a significant player in the North Pacific fishing industry; however, the limited extent to which the town does engage in the industry is significant to its economy. According to official records from 2000, Nome had 60 commercial permit holders with 83 permits for commercial fisheries, 28 of which were fished that year. In Nome, 19 individuals were registered as crewmen and there were six federal fisheries vessel owners plus two owners of salmon vessels. Nome's fleet was involved in most of the Alaskan fisheries: Crab, Halibut, Herring, other Groundfish, and Salmon. Fishing permits are specific to species, size of the vessel, type of gear and fishing area.

*Salmon:* A total of 28 permits were issued for the salmon fishery, 9 of which were fished in 2000. These pertained to three permits for drift gillnet: one permit for Cook Inlet (not fished) and two permits for Bristol Bay. There was also a non-fished statewide permit for hand troll. The remaining 25 permits were for set gillnet: one for the Bristol Bay, 2 for the Lower Yukon, 3 for Kotzebue (2 fished) and 19 for Norton Sound, of which only 2 were fished in 2000.

*Crab:* In 2000 the bulk of the permits issued in Nome pertained to king crab. There were 34 permits

of which only 15 were fished that year: 29 for pot gear in vessels under 60 feet in Norton Sound (11 fished) and 5 with the same gear were given to the YDFDA (4 fished).

*Halibut:* There were 14 statewide permits to catch halibut with longline gear in vessels under 60 feet of which only 3 permits were fished.

*Herring:* Only four permits were issued for herring in 2000: two to catch herring roe with gillnet in the Norton Sound (one fished), two permits for food/bait with gillnet in Kotzebue and Norton Sound respectively (none fished).

*Other finfish:* There was one statewide permit to catch freshwater fish with beach seine (not fished). Two permits were issued to catch the miscellaneous saltwater fish with longline, one with a vessel under 60 feet and the other for a vessel over 60 feet (none fished).

In 1993 the NSEDC, the regional CDQ, in partnership with the Glacier Fish Company, decided to begin supporting local fisheries. In 1995 the NSEDC founded the Norton Sound Seafood Products (NSSP). The targeted species were salmon, halibut, herring and crab. Although the operations of the NSSP spread all across the Sound, they are centralized in Nome with the Crab Plant and the newly constructed Norton Sound Seafood Center.

In accordance with confidentiality regulations, landings data for the community are unavailable. The city of Nome received a direct allocation of $1,166.27 in federal salmon disaster funds. These allocations were to compensate for losses due to prices plummeting in the international market. The NSEDC (the regional CDQ) also received $78,598.76 to reduce the impact of Steller sea lion protective regulations that came up after this species appeared on the Endangered Species List. Of this sum, Nome received $20,000 in community benefits. This allocation, under ESA regulations, was implemented in 2002.

## Sport Fishing

In 2000 the community issued 1,209 sport fishing licenses: 935 were bought by residents of Alaska. Although the proportion of locals is high, it does not preclude the possibility that the area could have been visited by numerous outsiders obtaining their permits elsewhere. In 2002 the village had five freshwater guide businesses licenses related to sport fishing as a tourist activity. Only one of these businesses does not have its headquarters in Nome.

## Subsistence Fishing

The ADF&G does not have systematic and reliable surveys on the subsistence activities of most of the Norton Sound communities, included Nome. However, evidences from similar communities in similar environments point out that these practices are fundamental to understand the economy and social structure of these communities.

An estimate of the ADF&G situates Nome's daily wild food harvest over 0.6 lbs per person. Such a quantity is an evidence of the importance of such practices for the local economy, especially taking into account its 3,500 inhabitants (the entire community, in average harvests 2,400 lbs per day).

Two more elements that help speculate the importance of subsistence activities in Nome are, on the one hand, the existence in the community of 151 household permits to catch subsistence salmon, accounting for 1,353 fish, mainly chum, and, on the other hand, the fact that the village inhabitants (as part of a tribe and/or part of a rural community) are eligible for the Subsistence Halibut Registration Certificate (SHARC). These allocations are based on recognized customary and traditional uses of halibut. Regulations to implement subsistence halibut fishing were published in the Federal Register in April 2003 and became effective May 2003.

# Prudhoe Bay (return to communities)

## People and Place

### Location

Prudhoe Bay lies in the northern waters of Alaska, offshore in the Beaufort Sea in the North Slope Borough. It is located approximately 800 miles north of Anchorage. Its area encompasses 416.3 square miles of land and 141.8 square miles of water.

### Demographic Profile

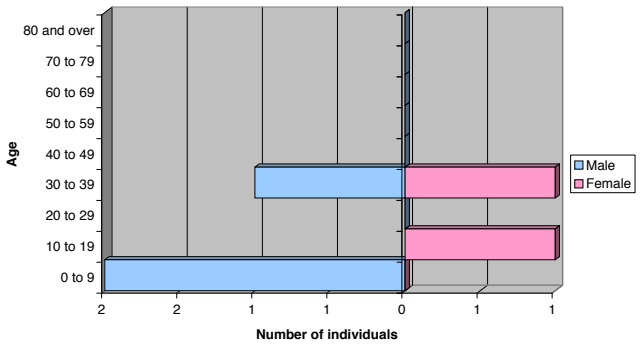
As the northern station of the Trans-Alaska Oil Pipeline, Prudhoe Bay's population is comprised primarily of temporary workers who do not live in the community year-round. Some 5,000 people are employed in Prudhoe Bay in oil-related industries, but U.S. Census figures reflect only the permanent residents.

In 2000, Prudhoe Bay had a population of five people, all in one household. The racial composition of the community was as follows: White (20%), American Indian and Alaska Native (20%), and two or more races (60%). Approximately 80% of residents were Native or part Native. The median age of the community was 11.5 years, much younger than the U.S. national median of 35.3 years. The gender composition of the community was 60% male and 40% female. In terms of educational attainment, 100% of residents aged 25 or older held a high school diploma.

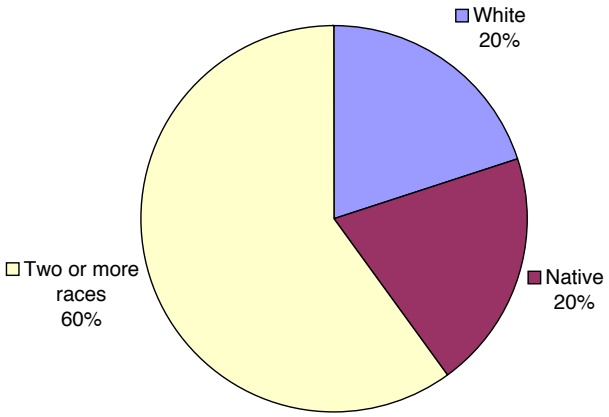
### History

The North Slope has been occupied by Athabascan and Eskimo peoples since prehistory. Oil was first discovered in Prudhoe Bay in the late 1960s. In 1975, construction of the Trans-Alaska Oil Pipeline, the largest privately funded construction project in history at that time, was begun. The pipeline was completed in 1977 and began transporting up to two million barrels of crude oil per day to the terminus at Valdez, some 800 miles to the south (Naske and Slotnick 1987:251-270). Today, Prudhoe Bay is primarily a work site for temporary workers in the oil industry.

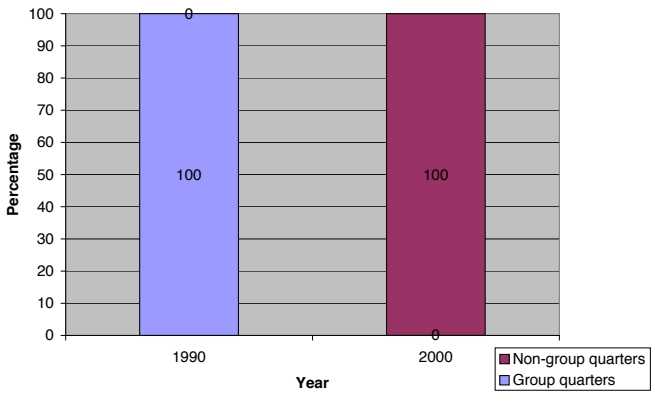
**2000 Population Structure**
**Prudhoe Bay**
Data source: US Census




**2000 Racial Structure**
**Prudhoe Bay**
Data source: US Census




**% Group Quarters**
**Prudhoe Bay**
Data source: US Census




## Infrastructure

### Current Economy

The economy of Prudhoe Bay is dominated by the oil industry. The Prudhoe Bay oil fields provide 15-

20% of the domestic oil supply of the U.S., and some 5,000 people are employed in oil-related industries. Data presented here, however, are only for Prudhoe Bay's five permanent residents.

In 2000, the U.S. Census reported that there was no unemployment in Prudhoe Bay, and 33.3% of residents aged 16 and older were not in the labor force (i.e. not working and not seeking work). The median per capita income was $19,880 and the median household income was $90,957.

### Governance

Prudhoe Bay is an unincorporated city under the jurisdiction of the North Slope Borough. It is a member of the Arctic Slope Association, a regional native non-profit organization. The nearest U.S. Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS) office is located in Fairbanks, as is the nearest Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G). The nearest National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) office is in Anchorage.

### Facilities

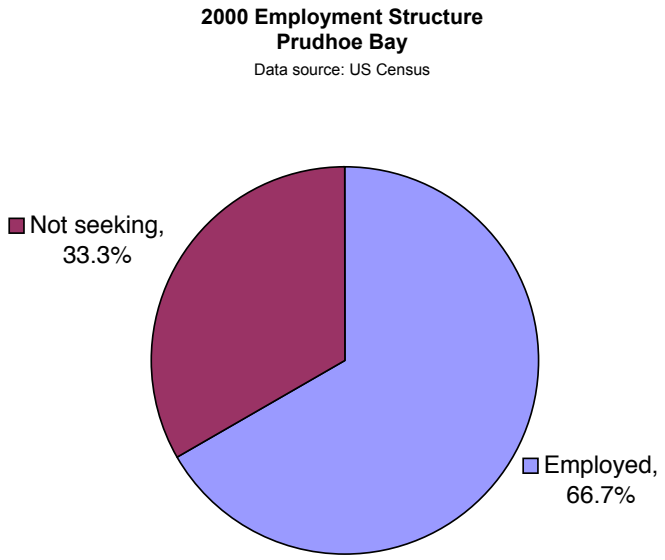
The airport, with a 6,500-foot airstrip located at nearby Deadhorse, is the primary means of public transportation to Prudhoe Bay. Roundtrip airfare from Prudhoe Bay to Anchorage is approximately $612. In addition, there is a state-owned heliport at Prudhoe Bay. The Dalton Highway is used year-round by trucks hauling cargo to the North Slope; it is restricted to the public north of Wiseman.

Most of the services and facilities at Prudhoe Bay are provided by the private oil companies that operate there. These facilities include group quarters for employees, a landfill, and sanitation facilities. There are no schools in Prudhoe Bay.

## Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

### Commercial Fishing

Although Prudhoe Bay is dominated by the oil industry, it was included in the community profile project because its one commercial permit holder amounted to more than 15% of the local population according to the 2000 U.S. Census. This one permit was a freshwater set gillnet permit for statewide waters, but was not fished in 2000. Other indicators of a fishing community (commercial fish processors, vessel owners, and crew members) were not present in Prudhoe Bay.




### Sport Fishing

Although sport fishing is by no means a major component of the local economy, Prudhoe Bay does exhibit some involvement in it. A total of 107 sport fishing licenses were sold in Prudhoe Bay in 2000, 76 of them (71%) to Alaska residents. Major sport species include Dolly Varden and Arctic grayling.

### Subsistence Fishing

The ADF&G does not have information on subsistence activities in Prudhoe Bay.

# Shaktoolik (return to communities)

## People and Place

### Location

Shaktoolik is located on the east shore of Norton Sound. It lies 125 miles east of Nome and 33 miles north of Unalakleet. The area encompasses 1.1 square miles of land. Shaktoolik has a sub-arctic climate with maritime influences when Norton Sound is ice-free, usually from May to January.

### Demographic Profile

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Shaktoolik had 230 inhabitants. The entire community lived in households rather than group quarters. According to the Census, 94.3% of the population was Alaska Native or American Indian, 5.2% was White, and 0.4% was two or more races. A total of 94.8% of the population recognized themselves as all or part Alaska Native or American Indian.

The gender composition was unbalanced: 44.8% of residents were female, and 55.2% were male. Similar to other predominantly Native communities, Shaktoolik was a young village. Its median age of 24.3 years was far below the national median of 35.3 years. Approximately 43% of the population was under 19 years of age, and only 10.6% of the population was over 55.

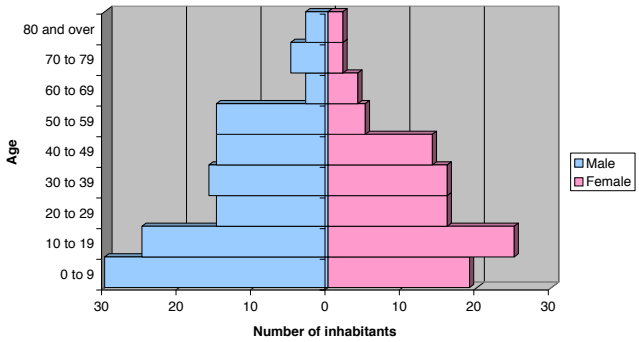
In terms of educational attainment, 78.6% of the population of Shaktoolik age 25 and over had completed high school or gone on to further schooling, 7.7% had obtained a bachelor's degree or higher, and 21.7% never graduated from high school.

### History

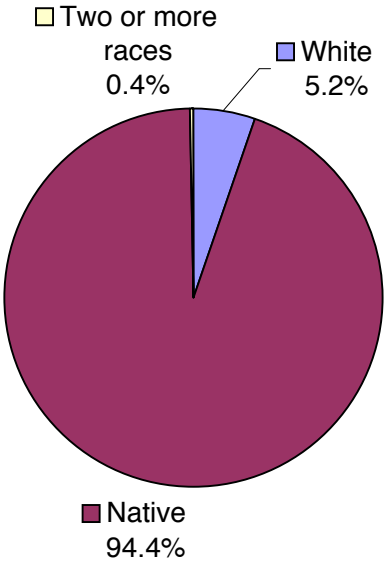
Shaktoolik was the first modern Malemuit settlement on Norton Sound. It was also the southernmost of these settlements. It was occupied around 1839. Prior to Euro-American settlement, Iyatayet, an old site situated 12 miles northeast from Shaktoolik was inhabited for some 6,000 to 8,000 years. Reindeer herds have been managed in the area since the beginning of the 20th century.

The location of the village was moved in 1933 from its former site, six miles upriver, to the mouth of the river. This new location proved to be too exposed to the elements, and the village was relocated to its present location in 1975. The city was incorporated in 1969. The economy of the village is still heavily

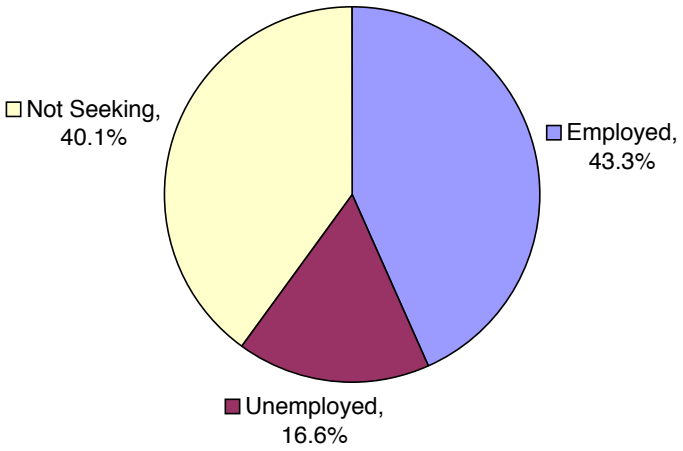
**2000 Population Structure**
**Shaktoolik**
Data source: US Census




**2000 Racial Structure**
**Shaktoolik**
Data source: US Census




**2000 Employment Structure**
**Shaktoolik**
Data source: US Census



dependent on fishing and subsistence hunting.

## Infrastructure

### Current Economy

According to most sources, Shaktoolik's economy fundamentally depends on subsistence practices supplemented by part-time or seasonal wages, mainly in the fishing industry (33 residents held commercial fishing permits). Reindeer herding also provides income and meat. Fish, crab, moose, beluga whale, caribou, seal, rabbit, geese, cranes, ducks, ptarmigan, berries, greens, and roots are also primary food sources. Shaktoolik's fishing fleet lands its catch either in Nome, Unalakleet, or the buying point operated in Shaktoolik by the Norton Sound Seafood Products company.

In 2000 the employment structure showed that 43.3% of the total workforce was employed, 16.6% was unemployed, and 40.1% of the adults were not seeking a job. Approximately 6.1% of Shaktoolik residents lived below the poverty level; this is not a very high percentage compared to similar communities with similar employment structures. The community had a per capita income of $10,491 and a median household income of $31,871.

### Governance

The second-class city of Shaktoolik, incorporated in 1969, has a "strong mayor" form of government with seven city council members. The city, located in an unorganized area, has a 2% sales tax and no property tax.

The Shaktoolik Native Corporation is the local Native corporation managing approximately 120,000 acres. The regional Native corporation, a for-profit organization with its headquarters in Nome, is the Bering Straits Native Corporation. This corporation operates a series of businesses, including the Bering Straits Development Company and the non-profit Bering Strait Foundation. Its counterpart in the area, the regional Native non-profit institution, is Kawerak, Inc. The CDQ of the area, headquartered in Anchorage, is the Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation (NSEDC).

The area is also served by the Bering Straits Housing Authority, the Norton Sound Health Corporation (regional health corporation serving the Bering Strait villages) and the Eskimo Walrus Commission (regional non-profit organization serving nineteen communities in western and northern Alaska). Also located in the community is the Shaktoolik Native Village, recognized by the Bureau of Indian Affairs as a tribal council.

Shaktoolik does not have an Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) office. Nome and Unalakleet are the two closest permanent ADF&G offices. In order to access to a Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS) office, Shaktoolik's residents have to go to Nome. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has its closest quarters in Anchorage.

### Facilities

Since 2002 Shaktoolik has better accessibility by air: a new State-owned airstrip was constructed in 2002 that enables regular service from Nome. A roundtrip ticket from Shaktoolik to Anchorage, connecting in Nome, is approximately $650. The village does not have docking facilities. Cargo, as for most of the region, is shipped from Nome and lightered to shore. The local residents travel primarily by ATV, motorbikes, trucks and boats in summer; and by snowmachines and dog teams in winter.

The Shaktoolik School has 57 students and 8 teachers. Health care is provided by the city-owned Shaktoolik Health Clinic. The town also has a village public safety officer (VPSO). The city has piped water and sewage systems that cover the majority of households. Power is provided by the city-owned AVEC Corporation.

## Involvement in North Pacific fisheries

### Commercial Fishing

Shaktoolik is a small community in which fishing activities of all sorts have great significance. According to official records Shaktoolik, in 2000, had 33 commercial permit holders and 39 all-fisheries combined permits, 31 of which were fished. In Shaktoolik 38 individuals were registered as crewmen and there were 6 vessel owners with operations in federal fisheries, plus 6 owners of salmon vessels. Saktoolik's fleet was only involved in three very specific fisheries: herring, crab, and salmon. The following is a detailed breakdown of permits issued to Shaktoolik residents in 2000.

*Salmon:* The salmon fleet encompassed a little bit

more than half of Shaktoolik's modest fishery effort. It accounted for 20 permits, 16 of which were fished. All of them were for set gillnet: 19 for the Norton Sound (15 fished) and one permit for the Lower Yukon River (one fished).

*Herring:* The herring fleet accounted for the other half of Shaktoolik's permits. There were 18 permits, of which 15 were fished, all of them for herring roe caught with gillnet in Norton Sound.

*Crab:* This was the final species present on the 2000 reports. There was only one permit to catch king crab with pot gear in a vessel under 60 feet in length. The permit was for Norton Sound and was not fished that year.

There were no processors in Shaktoolik and therefore no registered landings. Shaktoolik's fleet likely delivers primarily to Nome and Unalakeet. Shaktoolik received a direct allocation of $ 2,577 in federal salmon disaster funds. These allocations were to compensate for losses due to plummeting prices in the international market. This allocation was implemented in 2003.

The Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation (CDQ) also received $78,599 to reduce the impact of Steller sea lion protective regulations that came up after the inclusion of this species into the endangered species list. This allocation, under ESA regulations, was implemented in 2002. Of this sum, Shaktoolik received $20,000 in direct community benefits. The funds not directly allocated to the city were added to the general budget of the CDQ and helped to compensate the decline on fish taxes and to relieve the budgetary tensions of the institutions of the area.

## Sport Fishing

In 2000 this community did not issue a single sport fishing permit. This fact, however, does not preclude the possibility that the area could have been visited by outsiders who got their permits elsewhere. In 2002, the village had no businesses licenses related to sport fishing as a tourist activity.

## Subsistence Fishing

The ADF&G does not have systematic and reliable surveys on the subsistence activities of most of the Norton Sound communities, including Shaktoolik. However, evidence from similar communities in similar environments point out that these practices are fundamental to an understanding of the economy and social structure of these communities.

The ADF&G estimates that Shaktoolik's daily wild food harvest is over 1.8 lbs per person. In addition, 57 household permits to catch subsistence salmon, accounting for 8,116 fish (mainly pink salmon and coho salmon), were issued to residents of Shaktoolik. Village inhabitants (as part of a tribe and/or part of a rural community) are eligible for the Subsistence Halibut Registration Certificate (SHARC). These allocations are based on recognized customary and traditional uses of halibut. Regulations to implement subsistence halibut fishing were published in the Federal Register in April 2003 and became effective May 2003.

# Unalakleet (return to communities)

## People and Place

### Location

Unalakleet lies on the central coast of Norton Sound at the mouth of the Unalakleet River, 148 miles southeast of Nome and 395 miles northwest of Anchorage. The area encompasses 2.9 square miles of land and 2.3 square miles of water. Norton Sound is ice-free, usually from May to October.

### Demographic Profile

According to the 2000 Census, Unalakleet had 747 inhabitants. The racial composition of Unalakleet was as follows: 85.3% Alaska Native, 11.9% White, 0.3% Black, and 2.5% more than one racial group. A total of 87.7% of the population recognized themselves as all or part Alaska Native or American Indian. About 0.3% of residents were of Hispanic origin.

This community has a fairly balanced gender ratio, by Alaskan standards: 53.4% of the population was male and 46.6% female. The entire community lived in households. Approximately 7.4% of the houses in the community were vacant, some due to seasonal use.

The median age of this community was 30.5 years, significantly younger than the U.S. national median of 35.3 years. The Census shows a significant increase in the local population since the 1970s. In 2000, 64.2% of residents were between 25 and 54 years old, and 20.5% were under 19 years old.

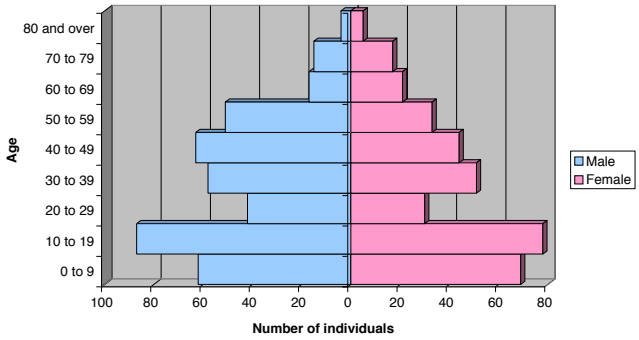
With regard to educational attainment, about 82.7% of the population age 25 and over had graduated from high school or gone on to further schooling, 18.0% had obtained a bachelor's degree or higher, and only 17.3% of the population never completed 12th grade.

### History

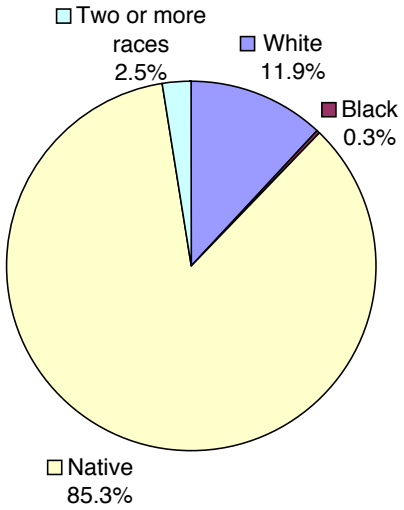
Unalakleet has always been situated at a cultural crossroads. The area, even before pre-contact times, was in a transition area between several central Alaskan Athabascan groups and several Eskimo groups (Inupiaqs and Yupiks). This explains the flow of goods through trade routes covering the entire Yukon basin, most of north and west Alaska, as well as parts of Siberia.

The name "Unalakleet" comes from the Inupiat phrase "from the south side," probably referring to the prevailing wind direction in the area. The remains of houses along the beach ridge are dated at 200 BC

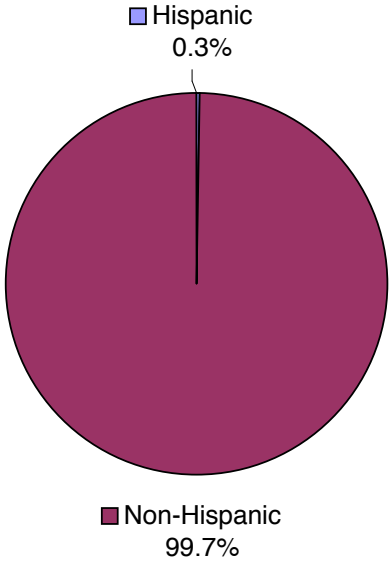
**2000 Population Structure**
**Unalakleet**
Data source: US Census




**2000 Racial Structure**
**Unalakleet**
Data source: US Census




**2000 Hispanic Ethnicity**
**Unalakleet**
Data source: US Census



to 300 AD. Unalakeet's modern history starts in 1830 when the Russian-American Company built a post there. At the end of the nineteenth century reindeer herders from Lapland were imported to Unalakleet to establish sound herding practices.

At the beginning of the 20th century Unalakleet was incorporated to the American communicational network by a telegraph line built by the Army Corps Signal Corps, from St. Michael over the Portage to Kaltag and Fort Gibbon. The City was incorporated in 1974.

## Infrastructure

### Current Economy

Unalakleet's economy is dominated by two main sectors: fishing activities and government employment. These are complemented by retail services and a slowly growing tourism industry. The city's dependence on fishing has grown with the installment in the city of a processing plant.

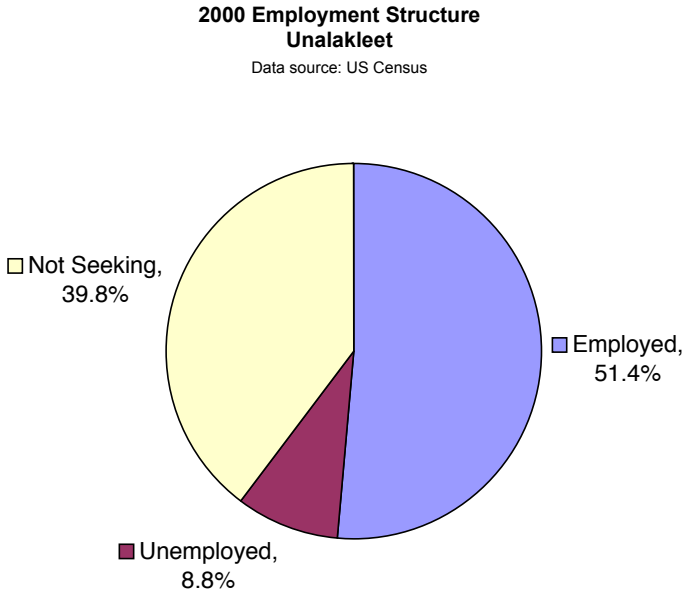
Fishing, as a commercial activity (109 permit holders), subsistence activity, and more recently, a sporting activity, is the fundamental element of Unalakleet's economy. Moreover, the Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation operates a fish processing plant in the town.

The employment structure shows that 51.4% of the total workforce was employed, 8.8% was unemployed, and 39.8% of adults were not seeking work. In Unalakleet 21.6% of the population works, at some level, for the government, that is 32.1% of the potential workforce. In 2000, the community had a per capita income of $15,845 and a median household income of $42,083. The poverty rate was 11%.

Subsistence practices and traditional interchange activities are an important part of the town's economy. The local economy is the most active in Norton Sound, along with a traditional Unaligmiut Eskimo subsistence lifestyle. Fish, seal, caribou, moose, and bear are utilized. The sale of alcohol is prohibited in the community, although importation and possession are allowed.

### Governance

The second-class city of Unalakleet, incorporated in 1974, has a "strong mayor" form of government with six city council members. The city, located in an unorganized area (i.e. not located within an organized borough), has a 5% sales tax and a 5% accommodation tax. There is no property tax.




Unalakleet Native Corporation is the local Native corporation managing approximately 180,000 acres under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). The regional Native corporation, a for-profit organization with its headquarters in Nome, is the Bering Straits Native Corporation. This corporation operates a series of businesses, including the Bering Straits Development Company, and the non-profit Bering Strait Foundation. Its counterpart in the area, the regional Native non-profit institution, is Kawerak, Inc. The Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation (NSEDC), the Community Development Quota (CDQ) group of the area, has its headquarters in Anchorage.

The area is also served by the Bering Straits Housing Authority, the Norton Sound Health Corporation (regional health corporation serving the Bering Strait villages) and the Eskimo Walrus Commission (a regional non-profit organization serving nineteen communities along the western coast). Also located in the community is the Native village of Unalakleet, recognized as a traditional council by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Unalakleet has its own Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) office. In order to access a Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS) office Unalakleets's inhabitants have to go to

Nome. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has its closest office in Anchorage.

### Facilities

Unalakleet is a relatively well connected community. A recently renewed state-owned 6,200 foot gravel runway allows for regular flights to Anchorage. The approximate price of a roundtrip to Anchorage is $480. The community has a dock to which cargo is regularly shipped from Nome. In winter, snowmachines and dogsleds are used for transportation.

Accommodation is provided by several lodges. The Unalakleet schools have 210 students and 19 teachers. Health care is provided by the Euksavik Clinic, owned by the village council. The town has its own police department and state village public safety officer. Matanuska Electric Association owns and operates the electrical system in Unalakleet, through the Unalakleet Valley Electric Cooperative. Water is derived from an infiltration gallery on Powers Creek, and is treated and stored in a million-gallon steel tank. In cold weather the supply of water is not enough to cover demand. Only 190 households are connected to the piped water and sewer system and have complete plumbing. The water and the sewage systems are owned and operated by the city.

## Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

### Commercial Fishing

Despite its size, Unalakleet is deeply engaged in all sort of fishing activities, especially commercial fishing. In the community, there were 109 permit holders that manage 155 all-fisheries permits, although only 68 of those permits were fished in 2000. The community also had 70 residents registered as crewmen.

The permits held by Unalakleet residents encompass some of the most significant fisheries of the Alaskan waters: king crab, herring, salmon, halibut, and others.

*Salmon:* Approximately 70 permits were issued in 2000 (39 fished). There were 65 permits for set gillnet issued in the Norton Sound (37 fished), 3 non-fished permits for set gillnet limited to the Lower Yukon River, and 2 fished permits for drift gillnet in Bristol Bay.

*Herring:* The second most important fishery for Unalakleet was herring with 67 permits (22 fished): 66 for herring roe to be caught with gillnet in Norton Sound (22 fished) and one non-fished permit for beach seine in Norton Sound.

*Crab:* There were 13 permits to catch king crab (5 fished). Ten permits were for pot gear and vessels under 60 feet in the Norton Sound (4 fished) and 2 non-used permits, again for pot gear and vessels under 60 feet, this time for the Bering Sea. Finally, there was a fished permit for the local CDQ (NSEDC). This permit was also for pot gear in a vessel under 60 feet.

*Other Fisheries:* There was one fished permit to catch halibut statewide with longline gear in a vessel under 60 feet. There was also a non-fished permit to catch miscellaneous saltwater fish with a hand troll in statewide waters. Finally, there were three permits to catch other types of finfish: one permit to catch fresh water fish with hand troll in statewide waters (one fished), and two non-fished permits, one for a mechanical jig and one experimental, both of them with statewide range.

In 1993 the CDQ of the area, the NSEDC, in partnership with the Glacier Fish Company, started to support local fisheries with a processing operation. Norton Sound Seafood Products (NSSP) was established in 1995. Although its operations are centralized in Nome, there is a plant in Unalakleet. The species targeted are salmon, crab, herring, and halibut.

Although, as mentioned above, Unalakleet has a processing plant, data on landings cannot be disclosed. This report can only acknowledge landings from Unalakleet's fleet, and probably from neighboring communities.

Finally, Unalakleet received a direct allocation of $3,720 in federal salmon disaster funds. These allocations were to compensate for losses due to falling prices in the international market. This allocation was implemented in 2003.

The Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation (CDQ group) also received $78,599 to reduce the impact of Steller sea lion protective regulations that came up after the inclusion of this species into the endangered species list. Of this sum, $20,000 was given to Unalakleet in direct community benefits. This allocation, under ESA regulations, was implemented in 2002.

The funds not directly allocated to the city were added to the general budget of the CDQ and helped

to compensate for the decline in fish taxes income and to relieve the budgetary tensions of the institutions of the area.

## Sport Fishing

In 2000 this community issued 407 sport fishing permits; 187 of them were bought by Alaska residents. This fact, however, does not preclude the possibility that the area could have been visited by numerous outside fishermen who bought their permits elsewhere. In 2002 the village had one freshwater guide business license related to sport fishing as a tourist activity.

It is important to mention the dual nature of recreational fishing in urban settings. On the one hand, this sector works on the commercialization of an individual productive activity turning in it into a sport for locals or, mainly, outsiders. On the other hand, it involves the individual who uses a sport fishing permit for catching fish for normal household use. In this way, this second side of sport fishing plays the role that in rural settings is played by subsistence fishing.

## Subsistence Fishing

The ADF&G does not have systematic and reliable surveys on the subsistence activities of most of the Norton Sound communities, including Unalakleet. However, evidence from similar communities in similar environments points out that these practices are fundamental to understanding the economy and social structure of these communities.

An ADF&G report estimates Unalakleet's daily wild food harvest at over 1.7 lbs per person. Such a quantity is evidence of the importance of such practices for the local economy, especially taking into account the fact that the town's residents number nearly 800 people (for an estimated community-wide harvest of 1,360 lbs per day).

Two more elements that help to speculate about the importance of subsistence activities in Unalakleet are, on the one hand, the existence in the community of 228 household permits to catch subsistence salmon, accounting for 25,127 fish (mainly pink salmon and coho salmon), and, on the other hand, the fact that the village inhabitants (as part of a tribe and/or part of a rural community) are eligible for the Subsistence Halibut Registration Certificate (SHARC). These allocations are based on recognized customary and traditional uses of halibut. Regulations to implement subsistence halibut fishing were published in the Federal Register in April 2003 and became effective May 2003.